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1142

17 September 1951

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

On 12 September, per arrangements made with [ ] over the telephone on the afternoon of the 11th, I met him for a thorough discussion of outstanding problems at 8:30 in the morning at the Roosevelt Hotel in Washington.

1. [ ] prefaced his remarks by stating that his major objective on this trip was to secure approval for his new plan to reorganize and broaden NCFA. As the plan had not arrived, it was not discussed at this time but discussion will be postponed until its arrival. However, the plan was roughly outlined to [ ] and [ ] in a meeting later in the day but reactions were withheld until a full investigation and study of the plan had been made. (The complete plan was received 14 September as an attachment to 1462-CRIWU.)

2. [ ] second objective is to secure permission to move the location of the newspaper offices from New York to Rome. This problem was discussed at some length, and he pointed out the various factors which influenced his decision. Failure of being able to exercise direct control over the editors, poor layout, failure to print articles submitted by the Propaganda Committee, the distance factor, and lack of adequate personnel in New York were among his reasons. The foregoing led him to believe this change was absolutely necessary if the paper is going to take on any meaning at all. He pointed out that [ ] urged this about a year ago but that he had withheld any action on the matter until he had convinced himself personally of the impossibility of working effectively under the existing setup.

3. Discussing the newspaper further [ ] advised me that the special edition to be used for the air drop featuring the article replying to the Yugoslav leaflet was to be ready on 13 September and all arrangements were made for transporting it to Athens as soon as it comes from the printer. In addition he said the newspaper carries an article on the new BGFIEND radio station. But unfortunately I did not press him for any details of the article which has been inserted on the last page of the

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paper. However, in a telephone conversation with [ ] on 17 September it was determined that the location of the station inside Albania was made by inference alone. [ ] has pouches several proofs to Washington for the miniature edition and in addition has mailed several sets of proofs to [ ] per cabled instructions.

4. Per a recent conversation with [ ] the economic warfare phase of the BGFIEND operation was discussed. [ ] was requested to instruct the Committee to send letters to various manufacturers and exporters dealing with Albania, shaming them for their action as a preliminary step in the development of this project. [ ] felt that the type of people who were involved in this trade were without conscience and letters would be of little avail. Nonetheless, he stated this tied into his present plan for developing the economic warfare program which has laid dormant so long. He mentioned that he had engaged the services of an Albanian merchant, long a resident of Trieste, on a trial basis to see what sort of intelligence could be developed. [ ] plan outlined in 1430-CRIWU is to determine whether this man can turn up any intelligence on trade with Albania not presently available to us.

5. [ ] handed me two cables for transmission; one regarding the October FIEND/VALUABLE meeting and a second regarding the movement to the States of Mr. and Mrs. Georges Gogo. The cable on Gogo brought to [ ] mind the knotty problem of documentation for the Albanians associated with NCFA. He pointed out this was soon to be a major problem as he heard it on good authority that IRO was to close down on 31 December and that IRO documents would not be honored by the Italians beyond early 1952. The Italians are apparently playing a waiting game hoping that IRO will be extended or hoping the United States or the United Nations will develop a system for handling stateless individuals rather than assuming the responsibility themselves. [ ] pointed out that the delays encountered in getting visas for travel (for example, Gogo and Kryeziu) worked to his disadvantage. The British who are able to produce a document within two hours harp on our inability to produce, and naturally this puts [ ] in a most embarrassing position. The British system is simple and one which should be investigated and emulated by CIA if found practical even if it means a change in existing laws. Under the British plan the British Service assumes complete responsibility for the actions, character and security of the individuals who are getting these special temporary passports. Possibly if we adopt such a plan, the guarantees for the individuals could be made even stronger by assigning someone from this agency to be with the visitor during this visit.

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6. Permission was given to [ ] to commence publication of the News Bulletin which was the subject of a recent [ ] dispatch.

7. (Ref: [ ] 0441, IN 24588). It was agreed that [ ] would not approach Monroe MacDonald on RFE recruiting activities until the matter was cleared in Frankfurt on [ ] return with [ ]. This is in conformity with the arrangements made by [ ] of SP. (Ref: [ ] 0521, IN 26175). [ ] inquired into the desirability of making direct contact with Sherman Gregory, an old friend of his, now Operations Chief of the Munich RFE station.

[ ] explained that he felt he could feed him suitable personnel and a great deal of material from NCFA. The result would be that NCFA could properly "guide" the activities of this station. As Gregory originally came on the scene in regard to tape recording I inquired into this matter and told [ ] had been advised to let the matter stand until his return. [ ] explained this matter was now properly taken care of as he had discovered [ ] had a recorder and [ ] was learning to operate it.

8. The status of Nexhat Peshkopija was discussed. [ ] stated he no longer had any interest in bringing him to the United States in anticipation of moving the newspaper to Rome but intended to hire him as soon as he was cleared and urged expediting clearance. [ ] is aware of Peshkopija's questionable reputation but claimed that nearly all Albanians have questionable political backgrounds.

9. The political activities of the Pine Tree (Bajraktari) team were discussed as [ ] felt that Bajraktari should be confronted with the reports on their activities. [ ] explained that he had discussed this with [ ] and that [ ] had reported he had received absolutely contradictory information and the matter was being held for clarification. [ ] pointed out party political affiliations present a tremendous problem to our HTNEIGH activity, and we will always be faced with the real possibility of losing control of teams who are likely to be moved by political considerations to represent their parties first and HTNEIGH second. This is one of the reasons behind the plan to place operations directly under British and American officers of FIEND and VALUABLE.

10. In reply to my question regarding control of the Welfare Fund which arose from a recent cable of [ ] to [ ] urging Toptani to protest about its reduction [ ] explained that this fund was handled by NCFA subject to [ ] approval of expenditures. His thinking behind the cable lay in the fact that the expenditures had been diminishing each month (they have gradually gone down from \$700 to \$300). [ ] believes this stems from the fact that Toptani

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is afraid to spend any money and from his feeling that Toptani's administration of this fund as HTNEIGH expenditures rather than as party disbursements, as was previously the case, is responsible for his action as the HTNEIGH officers continue to refuse to think except as party members.

11. [ ] stated he seriously was considering arranging deportation of Atoka and a nephew of Abas Kupi whose presence in Rome was detrimental to HTNEIGH activities.

12. [ ] assignment to [ ] was covered. He stated she was exactly the type of person he was looking for. A note from [ ] regarding disposition of her automobile was handed to me. [ ] feels this car should be sold outright and [ ] should purchase a new automobile. This matter has been turned over to [ ].

13. [ ] future assignment was the next matter for discussion. [ ] presented a note from [ ] stating her position. Her first choice is an assignment with the ZRELOPE project. However, she is also favorably inclined towards [ ] but apparently can't make a decision until her return to this country. [ ] felt he definitely owed it to her to approve her requests and give her very high recommendation. [ ] requested permission to send her to the States some time around the first of November after [ ] was properly broken in. I replied a dispatch would be sent to him on this matter.

14. It was pointed out to [ ] that although [ ] had confirmed the allocation of \$5,000 in gold to [ ] for his evacuation plan, OPC was in the throes of rewriting the entire plan and in all probability [ ] would not receive this sum. [ ] strongly felt that he should be charged with the responsibility for a field evacuation plan and it was a mistake to tie it together with the plan for evacuation of American personnel. [ ] considers that all the Albanians on NCFA as marked men and believes they would have to leave the city within hours of the outbreak of hostilities rather than in accord with any carefully tailored plan. I agreed to bring this to the attention of the proper authorities. The presence of an assassination team in Rome gives strength to [ ] views on this matter.

15. [ ] stated he would like to confer with a member of the art staff here next week to go over several cartoons in his possession and explain the type of thing he is looking for in his art work.

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16. [ ] explained it was common knowledge that several members of our November team were presently in Yugoslavia. He proposed the idea of sending cash through the mail to these individuals requesting them to come to Rome via Trieste. He felt this would give us an indication of Yugoslav's attitude towards our activities.

17. [ ] mentioned he had briefly seen Candito just prior to leaving Rome and felt that all his financial problems were taken care of.

18. The defection from the Legation was discussed. [ ] mentioned this was proceeding per our present information on the matter and felt we stood to gain a great deal by pursuing the subject. In the past this has been a very touchy subject and [ ] is aware of the difficulties involved.

19. Material on the NCFE university was passed to [ ] for the Committee.

20. Reproduction of leaflets. [ ] stated his plan was to have one or two leaflets prepared at any given time but did not propose to have any more than that prepared as leaflets frequently lose their impact if prepared long before they are dropped. He pointed out his relationship with [ ] was smooth and that the work submitted by [ ] was meeting [ ] approval without exception.

21. Regarding the Yugoslav activities, [ ] stated that he felt the Kupi-Sokoli meeting was a dead issue. However, the Committee has had approaches from the Yugoslavs and can establish this relationship at any time. The present course of action is to refrain from establishing any ties.

22. Plans. It was agreed [ ] would meet in New York on 18 September to meet [ ] and make arrangements for the miniature edition of the newspaper. On Wednesday [ ] expects to be in touch with NCFE and NCFA and plans to meet the [ ] and [ ] on Thursday. On Friday, [ ] returns to Washington for discussions of the proposed plan for revision and all other outstanding matters. [ ] plans to return to Europe on the 25th and has hopes of stopping in London and Frankfurt on the way.

23. Mention was made to [ ] of the report recently transmitted to [ ] by OSO to the effect that the League of the Mountains had made a direct appeal to NCFA for aid in one of the final radio

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messages sent to Rome by the Charity team. Although this group is obviously BKI and would not be acceptable to BK [redacted] regretted this information had not been passed to him in Rome. We agreed to discuss this matter further and make recommendations for using this group in our activities.

24. Jahova's visit to Rome was discussed as Jahova made a number of ridiculous claims which had been transmitted to us by dispatch. I explained to [redacted] that this matter had not been brought to [redacted] attention as yet as he is still away. Jahova is presently in the United States and is proving hard for OSO to handle.

EOW/mjc

[redacted] [redacted]